

# Agencies and Organizations Assisting Farmers

## MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES

28 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333  
207-287-3871

### “get real. get maine!”

a promotional branding campaign, to increase public awareness of Maine products. **Division of Market and Production Development, 287-3491**

### Farmland Protection Program, 287-7520

### Ag Business Planning Assistance

- **Farms for the Future**, administered jointly with Coastal Enterprises Inc., provides farmers grants to develop and implement business plans. **Dept. 287-7520** and **287-7620, CEI 772-5356**
- **NxLevel Business Planning**, coordinated by NRCS Heart of Maine Resource Conservation and Development Council, **368-4433**
- **Food and Farms Resource Guide**—*Handbook for Maine Agricultural Businesses* provides farmers information on various agricultural subjects and programs, **287-3491**

### Ag Business Loans and Grants

- Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund
- Potato Marketing Improvement Fund
- Agricultural Development Grant
- Agricultural Technical Assistance Grant Program
- Agricultural Water Source Development Cost Share Program

### MAINE FARM BUREAU

A non-governmental, voluntary organization whose mission it is to analyze economic and public problems surrounding agriculture in Maine. Augusta, **622-4111**

### MAINE FARM CREDIT

Specializes in lending to Maine’s agricultural, fishing and forest products industries. Aroostook Regional Office, Presque Isle, **764-6431**; or Southern Regional Office, Auburn, **784-0193**

## MAINE FARMLAND TRUST

A membership-based, non-profit organization working in the public’s interest to protect Maine’s precious farmland resources. Bucksport, **469-6465**

## MAINE FARMLINK

A farm transfer program that connects farmers seeking farmland with retiring Maine farmers and farm owners who wish to see their agricultural lands remain active. Currently there are 35 prospective sellers and 67 prospective buyers statewide with 10 prospects in Washington County. Freedom, **382-3255**

## MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

Developed from a loose affiliation of farmers and gardeners committed to growing healthy, chemical free food, to an internationally recognized advocate for food production that enhances and protects the ecological as well as economic vitality of rural communities. Unity, **568-4142**

## MAINE WOMEN’S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK

A collaborative effort of farmers, agriculture and related non-profit, for profit and governmental agencies seeking to help women and other underserved individuals find the skills necessary to begin or continue farming profitably. Lisbon Falls, **800-287-1458**

## SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Assists farmers, landowners and communities with conserving and protecting natural resources. Each District works in partnership with the **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA Farm Service**

**Agency** and other federal, state and local agencies, including the **NRCS–Resource Conservation and Development Council**. Machias, **255-3995**

## UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

A major educational outreach program of the University of Maine with offices statewide. Machias, **800-287-1542** or statewide **800-287-0274**

## Web Links

United States Department of Agriculture  
**www.usda.gov**

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)  
**www.nrcs.usda.gov**

Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources  
**www.maine.gov/agriculture/**

“get real. get maine!”  
**www.getrealmaine.com**

Maine State Web Portal  
**www.maine.gov**

Maine Food and Farms Resource Guide  
**www.getrealmaine.com/connect/**

## References

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service  
USDA Farm Service Agency  
Maine Revenue Service

# Washington County



## 2003-2004 COUNTY PROFILE OF MAINE AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Maine’s agricultural future is inextricably linked to its ability to continue to build strong, long-lasting connections between farmers and the communities they serve. To help all citizens better understand how agriculture is connected to every aspect of life in Maine, this county profile provides citizens, community planners and natural resource conservation groups important facts about farmers, farms, farmland and agricultural enterprises in Washington County.

## Farmers in Washington County



	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Farming as Principal Occupation	94	115	148	132	145
Male Operators (N)	NA	315	334	321	341
Female Operators (N)	NA	35	47	51	58
Average Age	57	53	53	54	56

*\*USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Statewide, farming has a unique connection to the history of Maine. Farmers are stewards of the land; well-managed farmland protects natural resources and creates beautiful open space. Many of Maine’s first settlers were farmers whose fields, farmhouses and barns shaped Maine’s historic landscape. Today, Maine’s agricultural producers and processors annually contribute over 1.2 billion dollars to Maine’s economy and employ 65,000 Maine people!

## Washington County Farmland

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Number of Farms	277	350	381	372	399
Total Acres (A)	84,517	80,556	87,438	94,755	98,336
Average Farm Size (A)	305	230	229	255	246
Total Cropland (A)	30,680	31,069	28,256	33,585	36,313
Total Pasture (A)	NA	6,929	8,674	4,600	5,667
Total Orchard (A)	29	33	NA	67	54
Total Berry (A)	14,640	11,782	NA	14,663	17,195
Total Hay (A)	3,024	4,232	4,489	2,762	2,899
Total Woodland (A)	43,934	37,937	43,995	49,969	53,007

*\*USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Land in farms increased 4 percent from 94,755 acres in 1992 to 98,336 acres in 1997. Full time farms increased 10 percent from 132 farms in 1992 to 145 farms in 1997. It is important to note that nearly 4 times as many Washington County residents work in agriculture, fishing or forestry than in any other county in Maine.



November  
2003



Unique to Washington County

- There are 10 granges in the county. **County Grange**, Granville Lee, Master – 454-0245
- County Chapter **Maine Farm Bureau President**, Gary Sargent, Surry, 667-6501
- **County Cooperatives**  
*Downeast Blueberry Cooperative*, Machias, David Kilton, 255-4709  
*Foggy Bottom Wild Blueberries*, East Machias, Mike Look, 255-4167  
*Pleasant River Canning Company*, Columbia Falls, Merton Allen, 483-6683  
*Sunrise County Wild Blueberry Association*, Cherryfield, Sanford Kelley, 546-7205
- **Maine Coastal Program** works to increase financial investment in Washington County and strengthen the County’s connections Maine State Agencies. Stephen Cole or Katrina Van Dusen, 287-1497
- **Land Trust Organizations**  
*Downeast Rivers Land Trust* (founded 2000) 483-4336; *Eastport Land Trust* (1987) 853-4485; *Great Auk Land Trust* (1990) 963-7522; *Woodie Wheaton Land Trust* (1994) 448-7075; *Quoddy Regional Land Trust* (1987) 733-5509
- The **State Historic Preservation Office** (287-2132) and **Maine Preservation** (775-7737) have information regarding the county’s agriculturally related places of historic and cultural significance.



Food, Farms\* and Fairs in Washington County

- 32 Farmstands/Nurseries/Greenhouses open to the public
- 6 Farmers’ Markets serving multiple communities
- 5 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farms contract directly with their customers who pay a fixed price in advance for fresh produce throughout the season
- 6 Farms offer Pick-Your-Own fruits and vegetables
- 7 Farms host special on-farm events and activities such as pumpkin hunts, animal viewing, hayrides and school programs.

*\*Some farms may be counted in multiple categories. Not all farm activities and retail services are listed here.*

Prime Soils in Washington County

PRIME FARMLAND

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines prime farmland as the land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce a sustained high yield of crops while using acceptable farming methods. Prime Farmland produces the highest yields and requires minimal amounts of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment. Prime Farmland is a limited strategic resource. No more of it is being created.

16,491 acres (estimated)

SOILS OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide significance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce a high yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable.

62,284 acres (estimated)



Annual Statewide Events and Programs in 2003

Maine Maple Sunday (4th Sunday in March) many farms in neighboring counties opened their sugarhouses.

Open Farm Day (4th Sunday in July) 2 farms welcomed the public onto their farms.

Maine Menus Month (October) 6 restaurants made special efforts to feature Maine grown, raised or harvested ingredients on their menus.

Great Maine Apple Day (November) many farms celebrated Maine’s apple harvest.

Maine Senior FarmShare assisted 17 farmers with providing fresh local produce to 263 low-income seniors. Statewide, 185 farmers benefited from nearly \$900,000 in sales and additional seniors received fresh produce through food pantries and community meal sites.



Farmland Protected in Washington County

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED

- 472 acres (4 farms) have been protected by 4 nonprofit organizations

TEMPORARILY PROTECTED

USDA Farm Service Agency

- 311 acres protected through Debt for Nature (50 years)

Enrolled in Farm and Open Space Tax Program

- 2,654 acres farmland in 2002 — 1,592 acres cropland plus 48,056 acres woodland
- 4,623 acres open space in 2001

Enrolled in Tree Growth Program

- 406,670 acres in 2001



*The average market value of agricultural products sold per farm increased 12 percent from \$96,762 in 1992 to \$107,956 in 1997. Statewide market research in 2002 showed that 89 percent surveyed believe that buying locally grown food strengthens Maine’s economy.*

Washington County Agricultural Sales

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
All crops	\$2,962,000	\$5,491,000	\$12,736,000	\$28,214,000	\$26,332,000
Livestock/poultry and their products	\$2,865,000	\$1,855,000	\$3,069,000	\$7,782,000	\$16,742,000
Fruits, nuts and berries	NA	\$5,262,000	\$12,443,000	\$27,728,000	\$25,642,000

*\*USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*